

The Why of the Resurrection, John 20:1-18 – Sunday, April 8th, 2012

John 20:1-18 NIV Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. (2) So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" (3) So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. (4) Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. (5) He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. (6) Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, (7) as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. (8) Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (9) (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) (10) Then the disciples went back to their homes, (11) but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb (12) and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. (13) They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." (14) At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. (15) "Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." (16) Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). (17) Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" (18) Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

- On this resurrection Sunday I want to do something a little different than usual in that I'll take what may be considered as an unusual approach.
- Let me explain, every year in anticipation of this time, I find myself sort of musing related to the meaning of what we call today, Easter Sunday.
- As a born again believer I've celebrated a total of 31 Easter Sunday's counting today, and I'm coming back to the realization of how simple it is.
- By that I mean, the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is childlike simple in the sense that it's all about the love that God has for us.
- We all know "what" God did in giving His only begotten Son, and we know "that" God gave His only begotten son, but do we understand why.
- I suppose another way to ask it is; do we really know the "why" behind the "what" of Jesus dying on the cross, and being raised from the dead.
- I would suggest to you that "love" is the "why" behind the "what" of Easter. Having said that, I would venture to say, everyone knows the story.
- Please don't misunderstand my unconventional introduction to an Easter message; it's just that I believe that we may actually know too much.
- We here in America know what all happened, where it all happened, when it all happened, and we even know basically how it all happened.
- However, knowing all of this may in fact be the very thing that has kept us from knowing why? I'm of the belief that the reason is; it's too simple.
- We as Christians can get so caught up in the traditional and the ritual that we lose site of the original, and in so doing we miss the love of God.
- We know God is love, and that God so loved, and even that there's no greater love, but on this resurrection Sunday, do we know it personally.
- While I know this will be perceived as a firm grasp of the obvious, I'll say it anyway; "God loves you." He not only loves you, He really likes you.
- It's for this reason that He became a man and died for you, paying in full for all of your sins for you, and then rising from the dead to be with you.
- What if I told you that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is supremely about you? I know I always preach that it's not all about you, this time it is.
- Jesus became like us, died instead of us, and rose again for us. Why? Because He wants to be with us for all eternity as was originally planned.
- This sets Christianity apart from all other religions, it's not about what man does for God it's what God has done for man, and instead of man.
- Christ's resurrection is celebrated as a religious holiday, yet God did what He did for us, so as to reunite us, because sin separated Him from us.
- By way of illustration, there's a simple graphic that communicates this childlike simple message called; the Gospel, which means "Good News!"
- In the beginning, God and man were together, but through Adam, sin entered the world and separated man from God. That's the "Bad News!"
- Because sin entered the world through the first Adam, Jesus entered into the world as the second and final Adam to die for and pay for our sin.
- The finished work of the cross, and the resurrection of the Christ, bridged the gap, and thus restored and reunited man to God, and God to man.
- This is where the "why" comes back into play. Why didn't God just start all over after Adam and Eve sinned? Why didn't He do something else?
- The answer; it was because of His love. Jesus Christ desires to be in a relationship with you, and He's updated His Facebook status to prove it.
- Did you know that the one need that every man, woman, and child has had from the beginning of time starting with Adam, is an unfailing love?

Proverbs 19:22a NIV What a man desires is unfailing love...

- By now you may be thinking to yourself how that this is a very "lovely" teaching but how in the world does this apply to me on Monday morning?
- Well, I'm so very glad that you asked, and I think you'll be ever so happy to know that my answer to this will also be my close of this sermon.
- Here it is, personally knowing, and intimately experiencing God's love for you, can mean the difference between eternal life and eternal death.
- I'm not so naïve to believe, that many of you here today, won't be too quick to dismiss this under the banner of saying; I'm already being saved.
- While I know and appreciate that more than you know, I would like to ask you to consider something with me as it relates to this love from God.
- Doubting and questioning God's love can have far reaching implications and ramifications in how we live our lives as believers in Jesus Christ.

John 11:25-26 NKJV Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. (26) And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

- I'll take it a step further and ask this; "if I do believe this, then am I living my life like I really believe this?" If so, then my life will really show this.
- When, not if, life gets hard, and adversity strikes, if I'm secure in the love that God has for me, then whatever happens will in no way move me.
- Furthermore, if I'm really living my life in such a fashion that God's love shows and shines through, then those around me will want what I have.